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REVIEW OF PRIORITY THEMES

Draft action plan on international cooperation and assistance with regard to statistical and computerized applications in the management of the criminal justice system

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION	1-4	2
I. CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF MEMBER STATES	5-20	3
II. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE IN THE COMPUTERIZATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE OPERATIONS AND IN THE DEVELOPMENT, ANALYSIS AND POLICY USE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION	21-26	5
A. Needs assessment and training: technical cooperation projects	27-31	7
B. Training and education	32-35	8
C. United Nations surveys of crime trends and operations of criminal justice systems and other international surveys of crime	36-52	8

*E/CN.15/1996/1.

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		Paragraphs	Page
III.	FUTURE DIRECTIONS: ELEMENTS FOR AN ACTION PLAN ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE WITH REGARD TO STATISTICAL AND COMPUTERIZATION APPLICATIONS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM	53-55	12
	A. Components of a technical cooperation infrastructure and proposed activities	56-64	12
	B. Other forms of multilateral cooperation, including the establishment of an advisory group	65-69	14
	C. Collection and dissemination of crime and justice information	70-72	15
IV.	CONCLUSION	73-74	16
V.	ACTION REQUIRED OF THE COMMISSION	75-79	16

INTRODUCTION

1. On the recommendation of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its fourth session, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1995/27. In section III of that resolution, the Council requested the Secretary-General to seek the contributions of Member States in order to prepare, in cooperation with th e institutes comprising the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network, for th e consideration of the Com mission at its fifth session, a draft action plan on international cooperation and assistance with regard to statistical and computerized applications in the management of the criminal justice system.

2. In the same section of that resolution, the Council als o requested the Secretary-General to include in the above-mentioned initiative recommendations for improving the management and information functions of the Crim e Prevention and Criminal Just ice Division* of the Secretariat and other entities comprising the programme network. In addition, the Council requested the Commission to review the membership and databases of the United Nations Crime and Justice Information Network (UNCJIN), with a view to increasing the participation of Member States, relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and academic and other research institutions. The Council also requested the Commission to consider the utilization of experts of interested Member States to advise the Secretary-General on technical cooperation projects related to the draft action plan, including their funding by the public and private sectors, and to take into account work already being c arried out in the United Nations and other international organizations, such as the Council of Europe, in comparing national crime and criminal justic e databases.

3. In its resolution 1995/12, entitled "Establishment of a clearing-house for international projects in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice", the Council requested the Secretary-General, subject to the availability of extrabudget ary funds, to initiate a project to establish a regional database on international training and technica l assistance projects, with particular reference to such projects for central and eastern Europe. A project on tha t subject has been initiated by the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the Unite d Nations.**

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*The Crime Prevention and Control Justice Branch was upgraded to a division by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/214. For convenience, it is referred to throughout the present report as the Division.

**Formerly called the Helsinki Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI).

4. The Secretary-General, in his note verbale dated 14 August 1995, requested Member States to provide contributions for the preparation of the draft action plan. In addition, he requested information on existing and planned projects involving statistical and computerized applications in the management of the criminal justice system, including an assessment of needs and of ways and means of meeting those needs in the context of international cooperation and assistance.

I. CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF MEMBER STATES

5. Fourteen States provided observations regarding their national computerization infrastructure. Replies ranged from outlines of basic computer needs to descriptions of fully elaborated systems that completely integrated all functions of the management of the criminal justice system. In some replies, plans and projections for future development were outlined, including functions to accommodate the dissemination of information outside national boundaries.

6. A directory of computerized criminal justice information systems, [1] issued by the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands and the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, provides an overview of over 300 applications available in over 20 countries. The systems are classified by criminal justice sector with a description of each application, including all necessary hardware and software and a contact person. The directory will be maintained on a continuing basis and will be made available via the Internet.

7. In Argentina, the National Supreme Court, in its resolution 1159 of 3 November 1992, initiated a plan for the computerization of criminal justice in general and the courts of oral proceedings in particular. Designed in collaboration with the end-users and technicians of the Department for Data-Processing Systems of the Secretariat for Legal Data-Processing, the system makes it possible for cases to be tracked from the time they are entered into the system to the point at which they are closed. Finally, in order to contribute to the establishment of an information network encompassing the entire national and federal criminal justice system, the federal capital and federal criminal courts will be computerized.

8. Austria has reported that its police agencies collect criminal statistics as the basis for a national security report. In addition, the Ministry of the Interior uses numerous electronic data processing and communication systems in criminal prosecution.

9. Bahrain has offered a number of views on the further development of systems to reinforce governmental capabilities in the management of criminal justice information. Of particular concern is the need to provide a systematic means of collecting and organizing information; technologically advanced countries, including Bahrain, as well as experts within and outside the United Nations, should assist developing countries in those efforts. Bahrain has demonstrated a strong desire to expand the use of the Arabic language in the dissemination of criminal justice information. Furthermore, Bahrain would value the publication and exchange of national experiences on the nature, extent and direction of crime, as well as on the social, economic and other costs incurred as a result of crime.

10. Belarus has in place a limited system for registering crimes and offenders for use at the administrative and operative levels of the criminal justice system.

11. China has reported that criminal justice statistics and information are maintained by the Ministry of Public Security, the Supreme People's Procuratorate, the Supreme People's Court and the Ministry of Justice. As of June 1995, 75 per cent of the subsidiary people's procuratorates and the people's procuratorates at the prefectural/city levels were equipped with computers. China has stated that expansion of the use and application of computerization in criminal justice is severely limited by the scarcity of both trained technical personnel and the necessary equipment. To overcome these limitations, China has recommended an improvement in the flow of information from experts in the field to requesting Member States; the expansion of regional training courses on computerization in criminal justice management by the institutes comprising the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme

network; the formulation of demonstration projects and other field projects to act as models for interested States; and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division taking advantage of its unique position by promoting the widest possible dissemination of information, including the expansion of technical cooperation and needs assessment missions in the field of computerization of criminal justice information.

12. Finland has stated that its Ministry of Justice and Ministry of the Interior are developing a new data system to facilitate the processing of criminal cases by public prosecutors and the courts. The system, which is scheduled for implementation in 1997, will provide electronic mail communication among the police, the courts and the prosecutors, together with the possibility of tracking a given case through the system. In 1993, the Finnish police improved their system for recording criminal activities, information gathered from investigations and outcomes of cases. The system became compulsory in 1995 and is made available to the Finnish Statistical Centre, which uses the information in producing its official statistics.

13. Germany has expressed its concern that the current financial limitations of the United Nations may not allow for the establishment of a comprehensive information network, as well as its operation and use by the international community. Instead, it has suggested that international cooperation should be enhanced in areas where computerized information networks already exist. Germany has developed the German Federal Central Criminal Register, which contains personal data on the accused; the competent agency and the file reference; the time of the offence; the charges and relevant statutory provisions, including a detailed description of the criminal offences; and information on the initiation of proceedings and their conclusion at the prosecution office. The information is made available to the relevant public prosecutor offices and tax authorities. Other database efforts are contained within the judicial information system (JURIS). It contains jurisdictional information comprised of decisions of the Federal Constitutional Court, the five federal courts and essential decisions of courts of first instance and of appeal; federal laws and ordinances; legal literature; administrative regulations of the Government and the *Bundesländer*; and European law.

14. Iraq has taken a number of steps towards the computerization of statistical information on crime for the purpose of assisting with planning and research. However, the current circumstances arising from the blockade imposed on Iraq may postpone some of those efforts.

15. In Japan, municipal police departments collect information on the occurrence and clearance of crimes by type and location of offence. That material is electronically coded and sent to a central processing unit at the National Police Agency, which uses the data in analysing crime trends. The Government of Japan has suggested that a database on criminal legislation of Member States would promote international cooperation in criminal investigation. However, it cautions that Member States should be concerned with three issues: the type of network required; the cost-effectiveness of such a system; and whether the financial resources of the United Nations could create and maintain such an effort.

16. Mexico has reported that, since 1927, the General Directorate of Statistics has compiled national statistics, organized by state, on defendants and sentenced offenders registered in federal and non-federal criminal courts of first instance. That information is published in the *Statistical Annual of the United Mexican States* and the *Statistical Notebook* and is further elaborated in the *Journal of Judicial Statistics* and the *Bulletin of Judicial Statistics*, each published since 1994. In 1996, the Government of Mexico plans to produce a compact disc with judicial statistics from 1989 to 1994 that will include a system for retrieving data by combining variables of interest. Plans are being made for an automated system for generating judicial statistics, as well as information related to the prevention and treatment of crime, which the Government feels will require international technical assistance and cooperation.

17. Qatar maintains a system to record, classify and retrieve fingerprints, with a view to assisting investigators in solving crimes. The system is connected to other personal information databases, which include criminal and civil records. In addition, the Ministry of the Interior issues statistical bulletins that include data on the volume, types and rates of crime, as well as trends in crime. The Ministry uses those data to help develop effective crime prevention

strategies. Qatar has been involved in employing the late st geographical information system technology to determine the following: criminal movement and direction; the relationship between crime and other social variables such as unemployment, class distinction and family breakdown as they relate to crime location; the determination of crime centres to aid in the deployment of resources; the seasonality of crime as related to location. Qatar has noted the importance of the role of UNCJIN in assisting in the dissemination of information. However, Qatar urges th e inclusion of material in all official languages of the United Nations and stresses the need for the United Nations to play a greater role in the preparation of comparative studies and the exchange of security-related data and othe r information.

18. The Republic of Korea has stated tha t it has entered the second stage of a four-stage process to fully automate and integrate the components of its c riminal justice system by the year 2005. The first stage, which took place from September 1994 to December 1995, helped prepare the foundation for a national information system by firs t collating and standardizing the materials of the Public Prosecutor 's Office and establishing a simple compute r network in that agency. The second s tage, which will take place from January 1996 to December 1998, will involve the expansion of the information infrastructure to include the creation of a local area network in each prosecutor 's office and a wide area network to interconnect them. The goal of the third stage, to take place from January 1999 to December 2000, will be the electronic management of all operations of the public prosecutor, including th e establishment of a national criminal information centre to coordinate all national crime data files. The goal of the fourth stage, to take place from January 2001 to December 2005, will be to create a fully comprehensive electronic infrastructure that will coordinate the activities of all divisions of the criminal justice system, including the Public Prosecutor 's Office, the Ministry of Justice, the courts, the police dep artments, the Corrections Bureau and the Social and Rehabilitation Bureau, and will provide for an international investigation system.

19. Tunisia maintains sta tistical information on a quarterly basis. The information is used to quantify the volume of activity in criminal courts and to help identify crime types. Future activities will include the recruitment o f experienced statisticians to retrain staff in the context of international assistance and the exchange of experience. Regarding computerization, th e current applications are limited to the three courts of first instance at Tunis and the three cantonal ju risdictions associated with them. The ultimate goal is the establishment of a network to route data from lower courts to higher courts in order to update police records and prisoner information. The Tunisia n Government expects that this nationwide effort will require several million Tunisian dinars and the assistance of the international community.

20. Turkey has a multi-component information management system for the administration and management o f criminal justice. The criminal records information system (ASBIS) is the oldest component. First developed as a manual system in 198 4, ASBIS is now fully electronic, containing information on court judgements and sentences, modification s in sentences execution of sentences and foreign court judgements of Turkish citizens. ASBIS i s expected to expand it to include prison information. A system for prosecutorial information (SABIS) has bee n developed and linked to the ASBIS system. Subsystems designed to manage the daily functions of the criminal court (CEZBIS) and the civil courts (HUKBIS) are operating regionally. Finally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ha s recently established a database, available via the World Wide Web service of Internet, which offers articles o n foreign affairs and other documents.

II. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE IN THE COMPUTERIZATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE OPERATIONS AND IN THE DEVELOPMENT, ANALYSIS AND POLICY USE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION

21. UNCJIN was established in 1988, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1986/11. It provides a means of facilitating the communication and exchange of information and data among the members of th e programme network, government and research agencies and interested experts in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice with a view to rendering ass istance in the field of computerization of criminal justice operations and the development, analysis and policy use of criminal justice information.

22. Within the framework of the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Havana from 27 August to 7 September 1990, the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justic e Division and the European Institute for Crime Preve ntion and Control organized a workshop on the computerization of criminal justice information. On the recommendation of the Eighth Congress, the General Assembly adopte d resolution 45/109, on computerization of criminal justice. In that resolution the Assembly, *inter alia*, laid down a conceptual framework for a technical cooperation pr ogramme for the computerization of criminal justice with a plan of action for the United Nations that in cluded: reviewing and assessing national experiences in the computerization of criminal justice; organizing regional and interregional meetings, seminars, and workshops; informing dono r countries of the needs of recipient countries in terms of technical assistance in computerization of criminal justice administration; and establishing a technical cooperation programme for the computerization of criminal justic e administration and the monitoring of its activities.

23. Subsequently, the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Commission at its secon d session, adopted resolution 1993/32, in which it endorsed the programme of work for the Ninth United Nation s Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which was to be held at Cairo from 29 April to 8 May 1995, including the holding of, *inter alia*, a two-day workshop on international cooperation and assistance in the management of the criminal justice system: computerization of criminal justice operations and th e development, analysis and policy use of criminal justice information. On the recommendation of the Commission at its third session, the Council adopted resolution 1994/19, in section IV of which it recommended that th e workshop on computerization should evaluate progress in computerization and the policy and management use of information. The Secretariat prepared three documents dealing with various aspects of computerization and criminal justice management that were subsequently considered at the Ninth Congress.*

24. That workshop was coordinated by the Europ ean Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, together with the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institut e (UNICRI), the Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and the Office of International Criminal Justice at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

25. The information available to the Secretariat suggests that, as most Member States have incorporate d computerization in aspects of their criminal j ustice systems, or have considered doing so, there is an increasing need for international assistance in the exchange of expertise, information and experiences. The Ninth Congress adopted a resolution entitled "Criminal justice management in the context of accountability of public administration an d sustainable development",[2] in which it requested the Commission to consider asking the Secretary-General t o prepare for its consideration a model plan on criminal justice management.

26. The Commission at its fourth session cons idered a report of the Secretary-General on proposals for improving the clearing-house capacity of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programm e (E/CN.15/1995/6/Add.1), which referred to international cooperation in the area of computerization of crimina l justice information. Among the partners in such cooperation are governments, governmental agencies, Unite d Nations entities, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, national and local professional an d scientific associations, academic institutions, private enterprises and individuals. The present report takes int o consideration the results of discussions held at the fourth session of the Commission. It has been prepared wit h contributions of UNICRI and the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control.

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*Working paper prepared by the Secretariat on Criminal Justice and police systems: management and improvement of police and other law enforcement agencies, prosecution, courts and corrections; and the role of lawyers (A/CONF.169/6) ; background paper for the workshop on international cooperation and assistance in the management of the criminal justic e system: computerization of criminal justice operations and the development, analysis and policy use of criminal justic e information (A/CONF.169/13); and progress report prepared by the Secretariat on the United Nations Crime and Crimina l Justice Information: present and future dimensions; towards the establishment of a United Nations crime and justice clearing-house (A/CONF.169/13/Add.1).

A. Needs assessment and training: technical cooperation projects

27. Needs assessment missions are essential to a successful technical cooperation project. The European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control has undertaken several needs assessment missions at the request of the Governments of Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Latvia, Poland, Russian Federation and Slovenia.* The Department for Development Support and Management Services of the Secretariat, in turn, funded needs assessment missions undertaken at the request of the Governments of Cuba and Nepal. The purpose of those missions was to determine the type of assistance that could be provided to national projects on the computerization of criminal justice management.

28. The needs assessment missions resulted in the following proposals:

(a) The organization of visits by senior executives and experts to study the developments in the computerization of criminal justice information in Member States more advanced in such matters;**

(b) The organization of management seminars on principles of computerization in the management of criminal justice;

(c) The organization of training courses in system development methodologies and techniques;

(d) The development of pilot projects in the areas of prosecution and tracking court cases and management systems and criminal record systems.

29. Through technical assistance and training, the Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders assisted in the execution of an assessment of the administrative organization of the criminal courts at Guatemala City. That assessment has led to the design and development of a pilot project on computerized court administration.

30. The Latin American Institute provided technical assistance, training and equipment for the implementation of a pilot project on criminal justice statistics for the Supreme Court of the Dominican Republic. The system is designed to provide comprehensive information on the overall and individual case-load of the courts at different jurisdictional levels and to provide a tool for the planning and management of the criminal justice system. Plans are under way for replicating the project in Nicaragua.

31. UNICRI, in cooperation with UN DP, carried out a mission in Papua New Guinea [3] with the aim of assisting in the development and coordination of crime and criminal justice information strategies and mechanisms, including the establishment of an appropriate infrastructure, such as a bureau of crime and justice statistics, and the planning of local victimization surveys. Parties to the implementation will include the Australian Agency for International Development.

B. Training and education

32. Since the Eighth Congress, the Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders has organized three regional workshops on computerization of criminal justice information as part of its

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*The missions to Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Latvia and Poland were co-sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The missions to the Russian Federation and Slovenia were undertaken in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands.

**The Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands organized and hosted such visits by senior executives and experts from Bulgaria and the Russian Federation. The visits were co-sponsored by the Council of Europe.

international training programme:* from 5 to 12 November 1991,** from 2 6 October to 6 November 1992 and from 1 to 8 June 1994. The participants were practitioners in various fields of criminal justice administration. Th e workshops were conducted under the guidance of visiting experts in computerization of criminal justice information.

33. The various components of th e criminal justice system (law enforcement, prosecution, courts and correctional administration) were equa lly represented at the workshops, which emphasized, *inter alia*, the expertise essential to planning and implementing computerization in criminal justice administration. They focused on a wide range o f potential benefits that could be achieved at all stages of criminal justice proceedings (from law enforcement, th e prosecution and the judiciary to corrections) by employing appropriate computer applications. They focused on key factors and guiding principles to be taken into account in introducing information technology in criminal justic e administration.

34. At the invitation of the Ministry of Justice of China, UNICRI organized the Seminar on Development an d Policy Use of Criminal Justice Information , which was held at Beijing from 12 to 16 September 1994. Participating in the seminar were representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Public Security, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the courts and academic and research institutions. In addition, participants were selected from among senior management involved in the collection and analysis of criminal justice information.***

35. UNICRI provided methodological advice and training related to the design, administration, analysis an d reporting of the results of the international crime (victim) survey conducted in 1992 to developing countrie s participating in that survey.

C. United Nations surveys of crime trends and operations of criminal justice systems and other international crime surveys

1. United Nations surveys of crime trends and operations of criminal justice systems

36. The United Nations has made a considera ble effort to promote the United Nations surveys of crime trends and operations of criminal justice systems. The main objectives of the surveys have been:

(a) To promote informed decision-making in the administration of criminal justice, nationally and cross - nationally;

(b) To stimulate Member States to develop their own systems of criminal justice information;

(c) To provide institutions and experts with criminal justice statistics and hypotheses for special research with a view to improving the effectiveness of programmes to reduce and control crime;

(d) To provide Member States with an overview of, and an opportunity to study, the relationship between various parts of the criminal justice system.

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*The first workshop was for participants in the international training course on the theme "Effective and innovativ e countermeasures against econom ic crime"; the second, for participants in the international training course on the theme "Quest for effective methods of organized crime control"; and the third, for participants in the international training course on the theme "Effective treatment of drug offenders and juvenile delinquents".

**A compilation of the papers presented in the first workshop was published by the Asia and Far East Institute. Richard Scherpenzeel, Edward C. Ratledge and Aaron Caplan, eds., *Computerization of Criminal Justice Information Systems* , UNAFEI Publication, 1991.

***The proceedings of the Seminar were published in Chinese and English by UNICRI in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice of China and the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlan ds (Ugljesa Zvekic, Wang Lixian and Richard Scherpenzeel), eds. *Development and Policy Use of Criminal Justice Information: Proceedings of the Beijing Seminar* , UNICRI Publication No. 53 (Rome, 1995)).

37. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 3021 (XXVII), the Secretariat carried out the first worldwid e survey of crime trends, covering the period 1970-1975. Since then, three additional surveys have been carried out, covering the periods 1975-1980, 1980-1986 and 1986-1990.*

38. The increasing importance of world crime surveys, the propensity and capacity of countries to participate in them and improvements in the methodology used are revealed by the number of replies received from countries or territories. A total of 64 count ries or territories submitted replies for the First Survey. This number increased to 80 for the Second Survey and 78 for the Third Survey. For the Fourth Survey, 100 countries or territories sent replies. The Fifth Survey, covering the period 1990-1994, is currently being conducted. As in the case of the Third Survey and the Fourth Survey, the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division is conducting the Fifth Survey jointly with the Statistics Division of the Secretariat and in cooperation with the network of resident representatives o f UNDP and with several institutes in the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network (UNICRI, the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, the Asia and Far East Institute for Crim e Prevention and Criminal Justice, the Latin American Institute for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and th e Arab Security Studies and Training Centre).

2. Report on crime and justice in the world

39. The current programme budget of the Crime Prev ention and Criminal Justice Division includes the publication of a report on crime and justice in the world, an idea developed at the initiative of UNICRI. The report is to b e modelled after the *Human Development Report,* published annually by UNDP. The American Society o f Criminology has offered to review th e progress on the report at its annual conference to be held at Chicago from 20 to 23 November 1996.

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*See *Trends in Crime and Criminal Justice, 1970-1985, in the Context of Socio-economic Change: Results of th e Second United Nations Survey of Crime Trends, Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and Crime Prevention Strategies* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.IV.3); *Crime Trends and Criminal Justice Operations at the Regional an d Interregional Levels: Results of the Third United Nations Survey of Crime Trends, Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and Crime Prevention Strategies* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.IV.2); Ken Pease and Kristiina Hukkila, eds., *Criminal Justice Systems in Europe and North America* , HEUNI Publication Series, No. 17 (Helsinki, Helinski Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations, 1990); *Delineation of Crucial Issues of Criminal Justice in Asia* (A/CONF.121/UNAFEI); *Crime and Justice in Asia and the Pacific: a report on the Third United Nations Survey of Crime Trends, Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and Crime Prevention Strategies, 1980-1986* (Tokyo and Canberra, 1990); and the interim report prepared by the Secretariat on the results of the Fourth United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (A/CONF.169/15).

3. International crime (victim) surveys

40. Victim surveys may indicate the extent to which criminal policy i s achieving its objectives; or they may indicate why those objectives are not being achieved. The main objectives of the international crime (victim) surveys are:

(a) To promote a crime prevention community and victim-centred strategy in line with the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme;

(b) To promote the systematic colle ction of accurate and reliable information as a basis for the development of rational policies, their analysis and evaluation;

(c) To promote research and policy use of the victimization surveys at the local, national and international levels;

(d) To promote international comparative research;

(e) To provide technical cooperation projects;

(f) To provide internationally comparable crime and criminal justice databases.

41. The potential of victim surve ys in making comparisons led to the first and second international crime (victim) surveys being carried out in 1989 and 1992 under the coordination of an international working group. The y encompassed altogether some 40 developed and developing countries, including countries in eastern and centra l Europe.* The results of the international crime (victim) surveys need to be put in the context of other studies and information related to crime-generating and crime-reducing processes.

4. International survey of crimes against businesses

42. Both the United Nations surveys of crime trends and operations of the criminal justice systems and th e international crime (victim) surveys focus mainly on individual actors. The international survey of crimes against businesses** focuses on organizations and groups, both as actors and victims in the criminal process.

43. The international survey of crimes against businesses is guided by , *inter alia*, the following objectives: the total costs of crime incurred by business per country; the types of crime that are most common; investments in security made by business; and level of satisfaction with local police.

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*The results of the second international crime (victim) survey appeared in A. Alvazzi del Frate, U. Zvekic and J.J.M. van Dijk, eds., *Understanding Crime: Experiences of Crime and Crime Control,* UNICRI Publication No. 49 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.III.N.2); the results for developed countries appeared in J.J.M. van Dijk and P. Mayhew, eds . appeared in *Criminal Victimization in the Industrialized World* (Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands, 1992); and the results for developing countries appeared in U. Zvekic and A. Alvazzi d el Frate, eds., *Criminal Victimization in the Developing World* , UNICRI Publication No. 55 (Rome, 1995).

**The survey is coordinated by the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands, the Home Office of the United Kingdom o f Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Australian Institute of Criminology. In 1993, pilot studies were carried out in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom and a full-fledged survey was carried out in Australia. The survey is currently bein g conducted in France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

5. Communication and the exchange of information: the United Nations Crime and Justice Information Network and other initiatives

44. Communication of information is essential to accountability, and accountability is at the core of goo d governance. The exchange of information concerning domestic and international policies helps create a climate of governmental responsibility for crime prevention and cri minal justice and sets a pace for the development of rational policy formulation.

45. UNCJIN is perhaps one of the most powerful mechanisms for improving communications between Member States. It encompasses three basic components: an electronic discussion list (UNCJIN-L), a World Wide We b database facility and access to other computer networks and their databases and services. UNCJIN operates o n Internet, a worldwide network of networks accessible by over 30 million users.

46. UNCJIN was formerly adm inistered by the School of Criminal Justice at the State University of New York at Albany with extrabudgetary funding provided by the Uni versity, the Bureau of Justice Statistics of the United States Department of Justice and, in 1995, the National Institute of Justice, also of the United States Department of Justice. In August 1995, UNCJIN was transferred to Vienna. The transfer has enabled the Secretariat to systematicall y enhance the clearing-house functions of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme.

47. Membership in UNCJIN-L, the electronic discussion list forum, now exceeds 700 government agencies, policy makers, researchers, experts, students and other individuals interested in crime prevention and criminal justice. While this number itself may indicate a high level of interest in electronic networking, most of the members of UNCJIN come from the developed world. There are still considerable difficulties in extending UNCJIN to developin g countries and in receiving information from such countries.*

48. Likewise, the process of building new databases has been slower than expected. With reference to the present status of such databases available via UNCJIN World Wide Web, in 1996, subject to the availability of resources, the facility will include the statistical tables of the Fourth Survey and the most recent criminal justice country profiles produced by the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control. Consideration is being given to making a connection to the database on crime prevention strategies compiled by the Australian Institute of Criminology and to establishing, with the assistance of a c onsultant, a database on extradition and mutual legal assistance in criminal matters. In establishing databases or making connections to existing databases, efforts are made to avoid duplicating work.

49. To assist users of UNCJIN and those interested in becoming users, the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division published an issue of *Trends: UNCJIN Crime and Justice Letter*[4] devoted exclusively to UNCJIN o n Internet. In October 1995, a revised version of the *Handbook of the United Nations Crime and Justice Information Network* was published with a full description of all technical changes associated with the connection and use o f UNCJIN since its transfer to Vienna.

50. Apart from UNCJIN and other electronic ne tworks, another way to provide international assistance, especially for countries that are just beginning to computerize the administration of criminal justice, is the development o f guidelines and manuals. Two manuals, the *Manual for the Development of Criminal Justice Statistics*[5] and the *Guide to Computerization of Information Systems on Criminal Justice*,[6] have been published.

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*As of February 1996, the following States members of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had full Internet connections allowing for electronic mail and datab ases access and development: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Finland, France, Germany, Hun gary, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Thailand, Tunisia and United States of America.

51. The 1995 directory of computerized criminal jus tice information systems [1] provides a means of communicating national criminal justice information to interested agencies.

52. The Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders has developed a bibliographical database, called Dat a Base Information Project, to provide national institutions with information on specific issues relating to criminal justice policy. This bibliographical database, which currently has over 20,00 0 entries, is considered a pioneering effort in its field in Latin America. The project was expanded under a relate d project on strengthening law libraries in Latin America, in which the Latin American Institute provided technical assistance, training and equipment for the development of a prototype for the management of databases for la w libraries in five countries in the region. Through the projec ts, which have been carried out with financing from grants from the United States Agency for Internatio nal Development (USAID), the Latin American Institute has supported national institutions in aspects related to the planning and design of information systems and the transfer o f experiences promoting the establishment of judicial information networks at the national and regional levels.

III. FUTURE DIRECTIONS: ELEMENTS FOR AN ACTION PLAN ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE WITH REGARD TO STATISTICAL AND COMPUTERIZED APPLICATIONS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

53. Both the replies by Member States to the note verbale referred to in paragraph 4 above and a review o f activities carried out in the area of computerization of criminal justice information by various entities of the United Nations crime prevention and crimi nal justice programme network confirm the existence of a variety of multilateral and bilateral projects or activities involving statistical and computerized applications in criminal justic e administration.

54. The General Assembly, in its resolution 45/109, provided the conc eptual framework for a technical cooperation programme on computerization of criminal justice information. Several Member States, the Department fo r Development Support and Management Services, the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division, UNDP , UNICRI, the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control and the Asia and Far East Institute for th e Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, as we ll as the private sector, contributed to the implementation of this programme.

55. As noted in paragraph 26 above, the Secretary-General submitted to the Commission at its fourth session a report on proposals for i mproving the clearing-house capacity of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme (E/CN.15/199 5/6/Add.1). The draft action plan outlined below builds on that report, as well as other work, and sugge sts components of a technical cooperation infrastructure. The proposals are directed towards increasing the programme capacity to effectively and efficiently plan, coordinate, fund, execute and evaluat e computerization efforts and the management of the criminal justice system.

A. Components of a technical cooperation infrastructure and proposed activities

1. Needs assessment

56. An important component of the ongoing effor ts to establish, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/109, a technic al cooperation programme on computerization of criminal justice information is the provision of exper t advice to Member States during the initial phases of computerization in the form of assessment of needs of th e requesting criminal justice agency of a Member State. Without a thorough assessment of needs, implemente d projects may fail to achieve the objectives set by managers and/or the costs associated with implementation ma y exceed the benefits.

57. A successful needs assessment mission requires: (a) thorough planning and preparation on the part of both the executing agency and the recipient; and (b) consistent and lasting political commitment at the executive and senior levels of the criminal justice system in the Member State in question. Internal mechanisms should be established that ensure an appropriate level of commitment for the development, use and evaluation of computerization projects (A/CONF.144/14, paras. 35, 41 and 72).

2. Evaluation of technical cooperation projects

58. Technical cooperation projects need to include an evaluation component to help determine the appropriateness of recommended or initiated projects, as well as to suggest follow-up activities. Such evaluation is important because of the need to adapt foreign solutions to domestic needs. In a given country, evaluation techniques may be common in some disciplines such as business administration but less common in criminal justice. Therefore, evaluation methods must be both simple and flexible.

3. Education and training

59. One of the ultimate goals of technical cooperation is to make requesting Member States self-reliant in building appropriate criminal justice information mechanisms to administer a fair and efficient system of justice. To obtain lasting and self-sustaining results, special briefing sessions should be arranged for the decision makers to enable them to translate the principles presented in the training seminars into actual technical cooperation projects. A major element in the introduction of computerization into the criminal justice system and the development and use of criminal justice information is, therefore, education and training. Careful consideration needs to be given to what aspects of information technology ought to be learned, the methods that will be used to train, who should be trained and when they should be trained in relation to the actual introduction of computerization. Audiences for training might include the following:

(a) Training at the strategic level for policy makers;

(b) Training for managers who run the systems;

(c) Training for technicians in systems software, hardware, and data communication;

(d) Training for those involved in the collection and analysis of justice statistics;

(e) Training for end-users of the computer application(s).

60. The institutes comprising the programme network can play a leading role in providing such training. The European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control has developed a training seminar to acquaint senior criminal justice officials with the process of computerization. The Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders has organized a number of workshops to introduce computerization in the administration of criminal justice. UNICRI has gained experience in training in research methodology and development, management and policy uses of criminal justice information, both official statistics and those derived from victimization surveys. The experience gained by UNICRI, the European Institute and the Asia and Far East Institute in developing and conducting training seminars could serve as a solid basis for further work. Where possible, comprehensive training projects should be included in UNDP country programmes as a way of augmenting national capacities and promoting sustainable development.

61. With the sponsorship of the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division will organize an interregional training course entitled "The United Nations Crime and Justice Information Network: Providing Information to and from Developing Countries", to be held at Seoul from 2 to 6 September 1996. Participants will include various officials of the Ministry of Justice and Supreme Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Korea; coordinating staff members of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division;

5 outside experts, each teaching one day of the fi ve-day course; and approximately 20 criminal justice officials from developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America who are in a position to formulate policy regarding th e computerization of criminal justice management.

62. The goals of the course are as follows: first, to increase awareness of criminal justice officials in developing countries to the importa nce and capabilities of electronic networking and computerization in the daily management of the criminal justice system; and, secondly, to expose those officials to the present and proposed services o f UNCJIN with a view to increasing their participation in it, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolutio n 1995/27, section III. The general aim will be to have the criminal justice agencies of the developing countries play an active role in UNCJIN by exchanging data and other info rmation. In addition, the organizers of the course expect to produce a training manual for use in similar courses.

4. Rosters of experts, organizations and resource materials

63. Additional components of an infrastructure for internatio nal technical cooperation include the development and maintenance of up-to-date rosters of activities, individ uals and organizations, as well as the development of resource materials on cooperation a ctivities undertaken by the United Nations and other international organizations. Several important activities are already under way in this direction. The European Institute has been establishing a clearing-house project on technical cooperation activities in eastern and central Europe. UNICRI is continuing its long - established practice of regular publication of the *World Directory of Criminological Institutes*, the most recent edition having been issued in 1995.[7] The Latin American Institute has established the Administration of Justic e Information System, a system providing information on international cooperation agencies, experts, statu s assessments, legislation and the international agenda for Latin America. Other institutes of the programme network have established their own regional and/o r interregional rosters of experts. The development, within the framework of the programme network, of an international roster of experts to facilitate the exchange of information an d contracting is under way. These databases are to be updated on a regular basis and placed at the disposal of th e international community.

64. With regard to resource materials, the 1995 directory of computerized criminal justice information systems [1] provides an inventory and d escription of innovative automated criminal justice information systems throughout the world.

B. Other forms of multilateral cooperation, including the establishment of an advisory group

65. Starting with the founding in 1988 of UNCJIN, most of the activities in the area of computerization of criminal justice information within the programme network have been carried out in an ad hoc fashion and wit h extrabudgetary funds. For example, the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division and the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control continue to resort to the services of one expert in the area of computerization of criminal justice administration, whose services have been volunteered by the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands.

66. The Economic and Social Council, in its resoluti on 1995/27, section III, requested the Commission to consider the utilization of experts of interested Member States to advise the Secretary-General on technical cooperatio n projects related to the manage ment of the criminal justice system. The General Assembly, in its resolution 45/109, requested the Secretary-General to establish an international group of experts that would have responsibility for:

(a) Reviewing and assessing national experiences in the computerization of criminal justice;

(b) Overseeing the establishment of the technical cooperation programme;

(c) Monitoring the activities of the technical cooperation programme;

(d) Informing Member States of the potential availability of funds and services from various donors in the governmental, intergovernmental and private sectors;

(e) Informing such donors of the needs of Member States for assistance;

(f) Consulting with relevant experts in the private sector in the field of criminal justice.

67. Financial constraints have thus far inhibited moving beyond the tentative arrangements described in paragraph 66 above towards the setting up of a more permanent group of experts pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/109; however, various experts working part-time or, in some cases, full-time might eventually form the nucleus of the more permanent group. In the meantime, the experts might also be in a position to provide the advice referred to in Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/27, section III.

68. The Commission may wish to systematize the exchange of information and experiences by creating a list of experts from different States. The experts would offer assistance to requesting States in the area of computerization of criminal justice administration. In cooperation with the interregional advisers in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, such experts could be called upon to meet requests coming from developing countries.

69. The goals of such multilateral action would include the following:

(a) To assess needs in the computerization of criminal justice operations and the development of criminal justice information systems;

(b) To design and coordinate training programmes in the computerization of criminal justice operations and the development of criminal justice information systems, including introductory training for criminal justice officials in the general principles of computerization of criminal justice, training in system development methodologies and training in data collection and analysis;

(c) To monitor the design, development, implementation and evaluation of actual computerization projects;

(d) To deliver other needed expert advice as requested.

C. Collection and dissemination of crime and justice information

70. Starting with its resolution 1992/22, the Council has increasingly emphasized the role of collection and dissemination of crime and justice information. A list of databases and surveys was reviewed by the Commission at its fourth session (E/CN.15/1995/6/Add.1, paras. 36-37). Participation in the United Nations surveys of crime trends and operations of criminal justice systems and in the international crime (victim) surveys has the potential to improve procedures for the collection and analysis of data at the national level.

71. The international crime (victim) surveys, covering self-reported acts of criminal victimization, are entering a stage of maturity, with experience gained from two cycles covering the period 1989-1994 and the new sweep to be initiated in 1996. The number of participating countries has increased from 14 to 52. Comparative and national reports were and will be produced for each International crime (victim) survey cycle, thus updating an important international database on crimes, victims and justice.

72. Although the experience with the above-mentioned surveys has been positive and encouraging, the low rate of participation of developing countries in the surveys has reduced their comparative value. Constant work is required to improve the data collection instruments, the methods of administration and the quality (validity and reliability) of the data.

IV. CONCLUSION

73. One of the most important challenges for United Nations technical cooperation activities in the statistical and computerized management of criminal justice systems is to maintain and further develop the institutional capacity of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme to respond to requests from Member States for assistance in that area and to evaluate the effectiveness of that assistance.

74. While action plans may not seem economically viable at a time of financial stringency, nationally and internationally, there is a clear need for United Nations funding agencies to include the development of criminal justice information mechanisms in their funding efforts and to cooperate within the framework of the programme in planning and implementing relevant activities. The involvement and close cooperation of UNDP in that endeavour is of the utmost importance. That requires, *inter alia*, the sensitization of national planning offices and of the UNDP resident representatives to the needs and possibilities of assistance in the management of criminal justice information, and to the priority accorded to them by Member States and United Nations policy-making bodies. In addition, innovative partnerships to finance projects could be explored with the World Bank, regional and national developmental aid agencies and the private sector.

V. ACTION REQUIRED OF THE COMMISSION

75. As one of the prerequisites of successful technical cooperation is the implementation of needs assessment missions, the Commission may wish to request Member States to make resources available for experts to undertake such missions, which would include an evaluative component.

76. Regarding the need for training and education in criminal justice management, the Commission may wish to recommend the intensification of such activities within the framework of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme. Specifically, the Commission may wish to consider recommending that Governments of developed countries should increase their support of the programme network by, for example, assisting in or organizing interregional and regional training courses on different aspects of computerization of criminal justice administration. The offer of the Government of the Republic of Korea to host an interregional training course on UNCJIN is one example of such assistance. Other possibilities for rendering assistance in different substantive areas could be explored.

77. Regarding the need for a roster of experts, organizations and other resource materials, the Commission may wish to consider, identify and recommend to the Secretariat ways and means of allocating new resources to update, expand and maintain the directories already established, as well as to develop other directories and rosters. In the absence of adequate budgetary resources, contributions-in-kind (e.g. the services of experts, the provision of computer programmers and programs) by Member States would be highly appreciated.

78. Regarding the need for other forms of multilateral cooperation, including the establishment of an advisory group on computerization of criminal justice administration, the Commission may wish to explore ways of encouraging (a) the provision of experts from interested Member States to advise the Secretary-General on technical cooperation activities and (b) the establishment of a permanent group of experts as recommended by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/109 (see paragraph 66 above).

79. Finally, in collecting and disseminating crime and justice data, whether by means of modern computer technologies or traditional methods such as crime surveys, the Commission may wish to encourage Member States to intensify their involvement in periodic data collection efforts, by offering facilities for training criminal justice statisticians from developing countries in the processing, publication and dissemination of criminal justice data.

Notes

[1]Richard Scherpenzeel, ed., *1995 Directory: Computerized Criminal Justice Information Systems*, HEUNI Publication Series No. 27 (The Hague and Helsinki, Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands and European Institute

for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations, 1995).

[2]*Report of the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Cairo, 29 April-8 May 1995* (A/CONF.169/16/Rev.1). The report will subsequently be issued as a United Nations sales publication.

[3]U. Zvekic and D. Weatherburn, *Papua New Guinea: Crime and Criminal Justice Information*, UNICRI Issues and Reports series, No. 3, 1994.

[4]*Trends: UNCJIN Crime and Newsletter*, vol. 2, No. 4 (September 1995).

[5]United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XVII.16.

[6]United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.XVII.6.

[7]Carla Masotti Santoro, ed., *A World Directory of Criminological Institutes*, 6th ed., UNICRI Publication No. 54 (Rome, 1995).